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Patterson working to close loophole in false pretense law, protect seniors

LANSING – Senate Judiciary Committee members unanimously passed a bill Tuesday that would allow prosecution for intending to commit a crime using a false pretense, committee member Sen. Bruce Patterson announced.

State law says a person can be prosecuted for using a false pretense to commit a crime, but not if the crime was intended and has not yet taken place.

“It is important to fix this law so people using false pretenses to commit crimes are convicted and prosecuted accurately and adequately,” said Patterson, R-Canton. “These criminals create fake situations and documents to prey on others, most often senior citizens, in an attempt to steal money, land or other property. It is our duty to protect Michigan’s citizens from these deplorable crimes.”

Patterson said most intended false-pretense cases involve a criminal approaching an elderly person and indicating they will do work on the victim’s home in exchange for a small down payment. The criminal then never shows back up to complete the work, scamming the victim out of money or other property.

Many criminals have figured out and started exploiting this loophole in Michigan law.

The bill now goes to the full Senate for consideration.

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